

Amendments to the Claims:

This Listing of the Claims replaces all prior versions of Listings of the Claims in the present application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A vehicle having a support structure for a spare tire, the vehicle comprising:

a first shell, the first shell including first and second end portions and a bottom portion extending at least partially between the first and second end portions, the first shell at least partially defining a spare tire storage chamber and including an opening providing access to the storage chamber, the opening being adjacent to the first end portion;

a second shell extending outwardly from the first shell;

a support member adapted to support a spare tire, the support member being slidably positioned above the bottom portion and movable back and forth along a movement path from a first position in which the support member is substantially disposed within the first shell and a second position in which the support member is at least partially disposed outside the first shell and disposed at least partially inside the second shell, the support member including a lower interface surface for directly contacting an upper interface surface of the bottom portion of the first shell in sliding engagement as the support member is moved along the movement path; and

a wheel ~~rotatably retention member~~ ~~fixedly~~ attached to the first shell, the wheel ~~cooperating with the bottom portion of the first shell to therebetween receive retention member~~ ~~interfacing~~ a side section of the support member and ~~configured to permit sliding movement of the support member along the movement path with respect to the first shell, and being operative to limit such that the wheel contacts the side section when the support~~

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member is at the first position for limiting movement of the support member with respect to the first shell in at least one direction substantially perpendicular to the movement path.

Claim 2 (Original): The vehicle of claim 1 wherein the second end portion has an arcuate configuration corresponding to the curvature of the outer circumference of a spare tire.

Claim 3 (Original): The vehicle of claim 1 further comprising a stopper configured to engage the support member, the stopper being disposed adjacent to the second end portion.

Claim 4 (Previously presented): The vehicle of claim 1, wherein one of the bottom portion and the support member includes an outwardly projecting protrusion and the other of the bottom portion and the support member includes a complimentary inwardly extending recess adapted to receive the protrusion.

Claim 5 (Original): The vehicle of claim 4 wherein the bottom portion includes an upwardly extending protrusion and the lower interface surface of the support member includes a groove configured to engage the protrusion.

Claims 6-10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently amended): The vehicle of claim 1 further including at least one additional wheel rotatably attached to the first shell retention member.

Claim 12 (Original): The vehicle of claim 1 wherein the vehicle is a pickup truck.

Claim 13 (Original): The vehicle of claim 12 wherein the support structure is attached to a bed of the pickup truck.

Claim 14 (Previously presented): The vehicle of claim 1 further including at least one

side portion extending at least partially between the first and second end portions of the first shell.

Claim 15 (Currently amended): A vehicle having a support structure for a spare tire, the vehicle comprising:

a first shell, the first shell including first and second end portions and a bottom portion extending at least partially between the first and second end portions, the first shell at least partially defining a spare tire storage chamber and including an opening providing access to the spare tire storage chamber, the opening being adjacent to the first end portion, and the bottom portion defining a first recessed region adjacent to the first end portion;

a second shell extending outwardly from the first shell and to a distal end, the second shell defining a second recessed region adjacent to the distal end; and

a support member adapted to support a spare tire, the support member being slidably positioned above the bottom portion and movable back and forth along a movement path from a first position in which the support member is substantially disposed within the first shell and a second position in which the support member is at least partially disposed outside the first shell and disposed at least partially inside the second shell, the support member including a lower interface surface configured to ~~for~~ directly contact ~~contacting~~ an upper interface surface of the bottom portion of the shell in sliding engagement as the support member is moved along the movement path, and a portion of the lower interface surface defining a flange; and

wherein the flange is configured to selectively engage the first recessed region in the bottom portion of the first shell ~~the support member and the first shell having a cooperative locking configuration~~ for substantially inhibiting sliding movement of the support member

relative to the first shell along the movement path when the support member is at the first position, ~~wherein and the flange a portion of the cooperative locking configuration provided by the support member is further configured to selectively engage the second recessed region in the second shell~~ for substantially inhibiting sliding movement of the support member relative to the first shell along the movement path when the support member is at the second position.

Claims 16-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Currently amended): The vehicle of claim 15 wherein the first shell and the support member define respective apertures which are aligned when the support member is at the first position ~~cooperative locking configuration comprises an aligned arrangement~~.

Claim 22 (Currently amended): The vehicle of claim 21 further comprising wherein the aligned arrangement includes apertures adapted to receive a locking member configured for selective insertion into the aligned apertures to inhibit sliding movement of the support member relative to the first shell.

Claim 23 (Original): The vehicle of claim 22 wherein the locking member comprises at least one of a pin and a rod.

Claim 24 (Original): The vehicle of claim 15 wherein the vehicle is a pickup truck.

Claim 25 (Original): The vehicle of claim 24 wherein the support structure is attached to a bed of the pickup truck.

Claim 26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Previously presented): The vehicle of claim 15 wherein the vehicle further comprises a retention member fixedly attached to the first shell, the retention member configured to selectively interface a side portion of the support member and to permit sliding movement of the support member along the movement path with respect to the first shell, and being operative to limit movement of the support member with respect to the first shell in at least one direction substantially perpendicular to the movement path.